



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Mark Finchem (R-11)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Representative Finchem Proposes Renewable Energy Components Lifecycle Management Legislation to Protect Arizona's Soil and Water

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Representative Mark Finchem (R-11) today issued the following statement regarding soil and water environmental protection legislation he will introduce in the next legislative session:

"100% green energy means different things to different people. If we're going to claim to be 'green,' substantiality plans ought to require lifecycle management of renewables like solar panels and electric vehicle batteries.

"Arizona is the 3rd largest solar-powered state in the country. We love our sunny lifestyle and our solar power. There are goals to boost our electric vehicle adoption to 500,000 new electric vehicles over the next 10 years, and Southern Arizona will host a \$1 billion electric car manufacturing facility in Casa Grande by 2021.

"That forward thinking for a massive rollout of solar power generation and electric vehicles requires forward thinking to address the sustainability plans for our state. Clean air and clean water are not mutually exclusive - we want both clean air and clean water.

"However, in order to protect our water supplies in this desert region, we need to avoid batteries and solar panels in our landfills. We do not want to have leaking toxics in our water supply or food chain, we must ensure that all the components are inert once retired from use. Policymakers have learned from the sad lessons of the past, with leaking underground gasoline storage tanks and leaking acid from lead acid batteries. We must avoid making those mistakes again.

"In the coming months there will be a series of discussions about the 'green' future of our state. We will examine the past, present, and future of carbon and sustainability. We ought to adopt a bright balance as a centerpiece of our prescription for growth and sustainability in the energy generation and use sectors.

"Arizona and the federal government have placed a high priority on decreasing hydrocarbon-fueled electricity generation by increasing the deployment of solar panel

technology and, at the same time, encouraged an increase in the number of electric vehicles on the road, with the objective of reducing reliance on internal combustion engines.

“Hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars have been allocated to promote the deployment of solar panel technology to reduce America’s reliance on hydrocarbon fuels, and billions more taxpayer dollars have been allocated to promote the policy of increasing the number of electric vehicles in use. Unfortunately, research shows that there has been very little, if any, allocation of taxpayer subsidies to provide for solar panel and electric vehicle battery decommissioning, resource recovery, and safe deconstruction and materials disposal of potentially harmful, toxic materials.

“For example, cadmium is an element used in many, if not all, solar panels. This is how OSHA describes cadmium, ‘Cadmium and its compounds are highly toxic and exposure to this metal is known to cause cancer and targets the body’s cardiovascular, renal, gastrointestinal, neurological, reproductive, and respiratory systems.’ Leaching of this single element from solar panels buried in your landfills would irreparably harm Arizona’s aquifers.

“We cannot, and should not wait for the federal government to prepare for the massive wave of materials –over a billion tons and growing – that will inevitably end up in our landfills if we do not take action now. This is a disaster in the making, and it can be avoided. With this legislation, we will be calling on the U.S. Congress, as well as all levels of governments, to work cooperatively with the private sector, nonprofits, and academia to develop and support robust solar panel and electric vehicle battery decommissioning, safe handling, and resource recovery programs that protect our environment.

“To be clear, the proposed legislation is based on proposed model policy under consideration by the American Legislative exchange Council (ALEC). Incidentally, this is just one example of the work that the ALEC is engaged in to support the unified action of state legislators around the country. Much of what will be contained in the Arizona legislation is related to a proposed ALEC model environmental policy. With the gridlock that has gripped Congress, and the pressing issues that states face, many state legislators have come to realize that we must act together at the state level since Congress appears incapable of addressing the meaningful issues at hand.

“Arizona has the authority and power to place meaningful controls on the use, decommissioning, and disposal of materials that have the potential of harm. Other states are contemplating similar lifecycle management action as well.”

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